30 August 1999

Original: English

Committee on Conferences
Substantive session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Koji F. X. **Yamagiwa** (Japan)

IV. Organizational matters

A. Membership

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 43/222 B of 21 December 1988, had decided to retain the Committee on Conferences as a permanent subsidiary organ. Pursuant to the provisions of that resolution in 1999, the Committee was composed of the following Member States: Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Benin, Chile, Fiji, France, Gabon, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, Nepal, Russian Federation, United States of America.

B. Officers

2. The Committee elected the following officers to serve in 1999:

Chairman: Peter Van De Velde (Belgium)

Vice-Chairmen: Djamel Moktefi (Algeria)
Alvaro Jara (Chile)
Vano Matchavariani (Georgia)

Rapporteur: Koji F. X. Yamagiwa (Japan)

3. At its organizational session for 1999 (416th meeting), on 21 April 1999, the Committee agreed in principle that the Chairman would undertake informal consultations with a view to determining the composition of the Committee's Bureau in 2000.

C. Organization of work

4. At its 416th meeting, the Committee agreed to meet as required to take up matters related to the calendar of conferences and its implementation, in particular the consideration of inter-sessional departures from the approved calendar. At the same meeting, the Committee requested the Secretariat to submit a draft agenda for 2000 at the organizational session to be held early in 2000. The Committee also considered the issue of participation of observers in the work of the Committee, as decided at the 413th meeting, on 4 September 1998, during its substantive session. Since no consensus was reached on the matter, the Committee decided to defer consideration of this item to its next meeting.

5. The Committee met on 24 June 1999 (417th meeting) to consider the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of subsidiary organs of the Economic and Social Council for 2000–2001, and to discuss the issue of the participation of observers in the work of the Committee. Prior to the formal meeting, the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences held informal consultations with interested members of the Committee on the subject of observers,

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during which members expressed the view that more information was needed on the practice and experience of other subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly on the issue of observers. At its 417th meeting, on 23 June 1999, the Committee decided to add an item to the agenda for its substantive session of 1999, entitled "Participation of observers", and requested the Secretariat to prepare a conference room paper on the subject that would include information on any formal or informal procedures, practices and experiences of subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly relating to the participation of observers. The Committee convened its substantive session from 30 August to __ September 1999 (418th to __ meetings).

D. Programme of work

6. At its organizational session for 1998, on 14 April 1998, the Committee had requested the Secretariat to submit to it, at its organizational session for 1999, a draft agenda for 1999, which was subsequently issued in document A/AC.172/1999/L.1 and adopted by the Committee (A/AC.172/1999/1 and Add.1).

7. The Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services addressed the Committee at the opening of its organizational and substantive sessions.

8. At the opening meeting of its substantive session, on 30 August 1999, the Committee agreed to delete agenda item 2 (b) (iv), "Cost accounting system for conference services", since it had been indicated earlier that the report requested was subject to extensive consultations within the Secretariat and was not available, and agenda item 2 (b) (v), "Subsidiary bodies authorized to meet away from their established headquarters in accordance with section I, paragraph 4, of General Assembly resolution 40/243", since no changes to the current pattern had been received.

9. As proposed by the Secretariat, the Committee also agreed to consider the draft medium-term plan contained in document A/AC.172/1999/CRP.7 under the item "Other business" if time permitted during the current session. In response to a concern raised on problems related to access to the optical disk system, it was decided to add a new sub-item, entitled "Access to the optical disk system", under agenda item 3 (d), "Continuous development, maintenance and enrichment of United Nations Web sites", although the two items were not directly related. Since it was a technological issue, a representative from the Secretariat would be requested to address the Committee on the afternoon of Wednesday, 1 September 1999.

10. At an informal meeting, on 26 August 1999, the Secretariat briefed members of the Committee on Conferences on matters related to the work of the Committee in the context of the agenda for the substantive session of 1999, and answered questions from delegations. On 31 August 1999, the members of the Committee on Conferences held joint consultations with conference services at Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, using video-conference arrangements. Members welcomed the efforts of the Secretariat in the two endeavours, which substantially assisted the Committee in its work.

11. At its 418th meeting, on 30 August 1999, the Committee took the decision to request the Secretariat to convene a briefing for members prior to its substantive session of 2000.

V. Work of the Committee during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, from 9 September to 18 December 1998

12. The Committee was seized with the following request:

Committee	*Request*	*Action taken*
Committee on Information	To reconvene a resumed session at Headquarters during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly	Recommended to the General Assembly that it grant an exception to section I, paragraph 7, of Assembly resolution 40/243, thereby authorizing the Committee on Information to meet at Headquarters during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly